

# HAMMER & TONGS



1966, No. 1



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Excerpt From Letter From the Norman Thomas  
Chapter of the YPSL

Socialist Party, 1182 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

NOTICE!

NOTICE!

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SOCIALIST PARTY 1966 NATIONAL CONVENTION

New York City  
June 10, 11, 12, 1966  
Workmens Circle Hall, 132 Fourth Avenue

1966 CONVENTION DINNER

June 11, 6:30 P.M., \$7.50 per person  
"Vietnam and the U.S.A." with NORMAN THOMAS and others  
(send in your reservations now)

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In The

The Farm Situation

By Frank P. Zeidler

Many people are concerned with the farm situation in America. Small farms are declining. People are being forced off farms by advanced farm technology and corporation farming. What should be done about this situation?

The condition of American agriculture must be viewed in perspective with the agricultural situation throughout the world. The population of the world is growing enormously. Hundreds of millions of people face chronic food shortages because their lands are not productive enough, either because of adverse climate and soil, primitive technology, or their social and political system.

In most of the nations of the world, the problem is that not enough food and fiber are produced to sustain the people. These nations include China, the most populous nation, India, Russia, and most other nations in Asia and Africa.

In a few countries, such as Canada, the United States, and Argentina, the problem of agriculture is sometimes one of an embarrassing surplus of products. Despite this embarrassing surplus, these nations often have a hard time disposing of the surplus to poorer nations because these nations have little with which to buy surpluses, or to make an exchange in the form of their own commodities. Often customs in one nation prevent use of the agricultural products of another nation.

In the United States there are the problems of "surplus" production, along with a considerable amount of urban and rural poverty. Even in rich agricultural areas, there are poor agricultural people. Many of these are marginal producers who are gradually being forced off the farm into the low income areas of the big cities. The small farms are declining and the corporation farm is taking over.

Republican and Democratic administrations have struggled with this farm problem. The Republican national administrations have tended to favor a course in which raw economic struggle among farmers takes place. Republicans believe that these bitter forces of competition will drive the weak farmers out and build up the strong farmers and thus keep the "free" market healthy and in balance.

Democratic national administrations have followed a path of legislation to dampen the struggle of the survival of the fit among farmers. They have therefore developed a system of price supports and of other types of financial aid. They have supplemented price support and farm loans with various rural development programs, grants in aid for planning and for public works, and with help training farmers for other jobs.



The Democratic program is certainly a better and more humane program than the Republican one; but unfortunately this program also has not stopped rural decline. Too many of the agricultural subsidies under Democratic national program go to the rich corporate farmers who vote Republican anyway.

The solution to the agricultural problem in the United States is not easy. No Democratic Socialist claims that it is, but we Democratic Socialists propose certain changes to provide better conditions.

The first effort we would make is an effort to reverse the pattern of scarcity in food production that has been our national policy since the period of the Great Depression. We would use this additional food in a program of food for peace and for the economic development of other people. If necessary, we would stockpile at least two years supply for this nation in case of natural disaster.

The world faces massive famines in the next decades, and the food producing areas of the world will have to meet the needs of feeding the growing population until some kind of population control can come into effect.

During this period of transition from an economy of agricultural scarcity to one of full production we would continue a parity program for farm products. Government purchases of food would continue for the low income people of this nation and for use of people in other developing nations.

We Democratic Socialists would also try to slow the pace at which corporate farming displaces other farms. We would encourage cooperative farming in its place.

Corporation farming is the result of several trends. Increased use of machinery and more involved chemistry processes compel farmers to have a large amount of capital or to get out of farming. Moreover the greater role played by chain stores in organizing their own sources of supply is determining the direction of farming toward corporate farming. Federal price supports tend to give a competitive advantage to the large scale grower so that he tends to displace smaller farmers. This trend toward fewer and larger corporate farms is dangerous. If large scale farming is necessary, it should be carried on by large scale voluntary farming cooperative. We Democratic Socialists would consider legislation to encourage such large scale cooperatives in farming.

Even with cooperative farming instead of corporation farming a certain number of small farm operators may be displaced. These people should not be driven into the already over-populated metropolitan areas, where they become part of the urban poor. Instead they should be directed to job opportunities in smaller communities. We Democratic would stop the drift of population to the already overloaded metropolitan areas and we would encourage the revitalization of some small cities. \*

(see our pamphlet: "Changes Democratic Socialists Would Propose in City Building.")



To take care of displaced agricultural producers, we Democratic Socialists would encourage the location of industry, new and old in smaller communities. We would encourage this location through tax incentives and through industrial zoning regulations. Industrial zoning regulations are needed to prevent air, water, and land pollution, and excessive concentrations of populations in areas where the natural resources can not adequately provide for the people.

The natural resources of most of the metropolitan areas of the nation are already severely overtaxed.

The movement of industry and population into smaller cities requires proper city planning to prevent wasteful land use and destruction of farm land and the beauty of the countryside. We Democratic Socialists therefore will emphasize city planning for small towns, and land use planning for counties.

Land use planning for counties is necessary to meet the land use needs of each county for natural resource industries such as agriculture and recreation, for watershed and water resource protection, and for soil conservation. The counties of this nation for the most part are poorly organized, so that we Democratic Socialists would seek to strengthen county government, and perhaps to consolidate many of the weaker counties to give them enough collective strength to meet their needs.

Because of world needs for food and fiber and many derivatives of agricultural production, we Democratic Socialists will encourage increased agricultural production. We will encourage the application of chemistry, genetics, and the biological and physical sciences not only to produce more food, but to develop new useful products and new useful plant species of many types. We will form research institutes to accomplish these ends. We will put special efforts into the study of nutrition, and food needs for the people of the world who suffer from certain deficiencies such as protein deficiencies.

The lives of people living in rural areas and rural counties must be improved in a number of ways. Rural people must have better medical and health service, greater cultural opportunities, more vocational and technical education, and better communications in radio and television. We Democratic Socialists will endeavor to frame legislation to encourage public and private agencies to achieve these results.

The life of rural people must also be made more democratic in character. Rural communities in America are often feudal communities, dominated by large land owners, bankers, manufacturers, or local editors, who possess power over the jobs in the community. Many rural communities in America present a reactionary political front. This must be changed by encouraging cooperatives, trade unions, civic groups, and community councils representing the whole segment of people including low income and poverty stricken people.

The income of many rural people, especially field workers, is far too low. We Democratic Socialists will work to change this pattern by special education measures, giving migrant agricultural workers a stable base, upgrading the



skills of agricultural workers, and if necessary, subsidizing their income by direct grants.

We Democratic Socialists will concern ourselves with measures to improve the quality of rural housing through grants in aid, through zoning regulations, through rural planning, and other devices which are now in existence but which are not being used sufficiently. Rural housing must be designed better to resist wind and fire damage and to be made more safe and sanitary.

Democratic Socialists have always been interested in conserving land, water, natural resources, and the beauty of the landscape. We will continue and extend these patterns which we have helped establish in American life. In our efforts to provide rural areas of recreation for rural and urban people alike, we will make sure at the same time to preserve areas of natural beauty.

Many of the proposals we make can be carried out with existing governmental machinery without many changes in laws and without a great new cost. Other changes, however, will require expenditure in the public sector of the economy. We will therefore propose budgets of expenditures in state, county and local governments to achieve results consistent with out national proposals and to match national funds for rural improvement.

Our budgets and proposed expenditures will be the results of democratically made decisions by the people affected on planning alternatives presented by skillful, democratic planners. These planners, we propose, must consider alternate goals to rural improvement and the means of financing them. We will use the latest mathematical techniques and studies to determine how the economy can be smoothly expanded to provide for these new agricultural programs.

This pamphlet does not allow us to spell out our program proposals in detail, but we welcome you to join us and help achieve these results. The nation needs our leadership for a new life for agricultural and rural people in this age of changing technology. Our essential purpose is to remember humanity and protect it from ruthless changes dictated by a money economy, or a bureaucratic state.



Walter Bubbert's Criticism of Frank Zeidler's Paper  
on the Farm Situation

6a

Dear Comrades:

Regarding the proposed plank on Agriculture for the Socialist Party, I have read it, made lots of notes but I believe, because it doesn't mention Wisconsin or even the county agricultural agent, having experienced graduation from the Milwaukee Aggies that Whitnall started, and also graduated from the UW Cow College, that we ought to turn it over to the next SP National Convention.

As I said, it doesn't hit home.

We can take the northern half of Wisconsin out of its marginal agricultural production and the nation's economy wouldn't miss it.

The North has its water and recreation values but needs the financial support of the Southeastern industrial counties via income tax rebates, etc.

Maybe we ought to suggest following the platforms of the FU and NFO, rather than the Farm Bureau.

Walter Bubbert



Memo from Carl Dahlgren, Local Philadelphia  
With the Help of Mark Twain

As we hear more talk of peace in Vietnam we also hear of more American troops arriving in that little nation and the call for the expenditure of more and more money to finance the war. The following sounds like it could have appeared in print in 1965 but it is attributed to Mark Twain.

"The loud little handful...will shout for war. The pulpit will warily and cautiously object -- at first. The great, big dull bulk of the nation will rub its sleeping eyes and try to make out there should be a war and will say earnestly and indignantly, 'it is unjust and dishonorable and there is no necessity for it'. Then the handful will shout louder. A few fair hair men on the other side will argue and reason against the war...; those others will outshout them and presently the anti-war audiences will thin out and lose popularity. Before long you will see this curious thing: the speakers stoned from the platform and free speech strangled by hordes of furious men who in their secret hearts are at one with the stoned speakers. And now the whole nation, pulpit and all -- will take up the war cry."

We receive assurances that the "Great Society" will move ahead in spite of the war. We hope the war isn't a re-run of previous attempts in history to deal with unemployment. It would be a very expensive solution, if indeed it were a solution at all.

Mr. Johnson's sincerity is up for close scrutiny but some of us are gambling on putting it to a positive test by sending men to Congress in the Fall who favor the things Mr. Johnson says he favors instead of the things he does.



By Francis Garner

In the ACCIDENTAL CENTURY, Michael Harrington has presented brilliantly the proposition that vast, rapid, and thoroughgoing technological changes have in an almost "casual" way brought about revolutionary social and economic changes. There has been relative growth of the already great corporations; increasing government control, regulations, interference, and allocation of funds; centralization of power in the leadership of the two capitalist parties; and the ever more prominent role of the military and the security branches of the government. Through planning, mis-planning, and even non-planning we have moved far toward a collectivist society.

Most of those who call themselves Socialist believe that such a society can be brought under democratic and cooperative control and thus increase the dignity of the individual. Such socialists are equally convinced that democratic collectivism, Socialism, will never exist unless a sustained and deliberate effort is made in that direction. Without that effort we will drift or be driven to totalitarianism of some variety.

What program-what slogans can be advanced by Socialists which can win the support of a large part of the spectrum from the idle poor through the middle class to the idle rich? Here is a suggested list:

1. Soak the rich-Give an adequate income to the poor-Lighten the tax load on the middle class. For a start raise the personal exemption figure in the Federal income tax to \$1200. Increase the rate on high incomes. Close the tax loopholes.
2. Freeze the military budget at the present dollar level. End the military service draft.
3. Open the books on the activities and finances of the so-called security agencies such as the FBI and the CIA.
4. Press for democracy everywhere, particularly in government, politics, and the educational systems. Maintain the basic right to organize and strike for public employees.
5. Plan ahead on a national scale. What profit is there if our conventional business motives lead to a depleted society?
6. Pay the students in a public education program from the cradle to the grave.
7. Increase social welfare programs to meet all the needs of the needy.



Will U.S. Learn What Vietnam is Trying to Teach?"

(8)

By Ruth H. Pool

Shall we learn that-

Communism can be neither eliminated nor contained by military force? (You don't kill ideas with bullets) Whenever military pressure is applied, Communist activity is stimulated; its various elements solidify; perimeter areas are thrust inward toward the center; monolithic tendencies increase.

Shall we ever be willing to undertake a true appraisal of the origin, primary causes, the purpose and the moral elements of strength in the goals to which Communism aspires?

Can we ever be honest enough to uncover for an uninformed public the crimes of the Tzarist regimes, the pitiful plight of its subjects, their misery, despair and hopelessness? Do we dare call to mind the unholy alliance of an entrenched nobility with a decadent religious fanaticism?

How about applying this same sort of critical analysis to the structure of pre-revolutionary China? Shouldn't the American people be reminded of some of the facts of life in the old days of coolies and peasants - the sins of the Western nations against this ancient and proud people? Then shan't we give the government of the People's Republic of China due credit for its almost miraculous successes in agricultural and industrial advance in providing health and educational services and opportunities to the masses of people? Can't we be big enough to admit that the present government of China enjoys popular support?

Can we free ourselves of the false assumption that Communism, unlike any other social system is incapable of change? Don't we realize that external tensions and military threats contribute to ruthless methods and dictatorial practices? Shan't we take note of the fact that the new generation of Communist leaders emerging from their universities are going to call for vast changes and improvements, if not too hampered by problems of security due to military threats?

Don't people see how preposterous the domino theory is in face of recent events in Indonesia and Africa where Communist errors have been subjected to naked exposure? How could Communist China sweep down with due speed on the far corners of the globe since she lacks ships and air power? Do people whose economic needs are being well met care to consider change?

Isn't it about time that the American people take a second look at the relationship between the profit motive and military involvement? Does anyone dare talk about taking the profits out of war? Eternal vigilance on methods of shifting from weaponry to constructive social reconstruction at home and the world over is called for.

The real lesson from Vietnam is that killing people and the destruction of his works will solve nothing but only complicate our agonies. This atomic age demands explosive thinking and dramatic action.



## Fund Drive

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4/22/66

	<u>Quota</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Percent</u>
California at large	\$250	\$663	265
Foreign	150	198	132
Cleveland	800	820	102
Toledo	30	30	100
Suffolk	100	89	89
Pennsylvania at large	150	133	88
Northern New England	100	85	85
Indiana	200	163	81
Local Berks	200	155	78
Central Philadelphia	200	154	77
National Office	500	363	72
Texas	30	21	70
Iowa	100	66	66
Washington State	100	65	65
Los Angeles	1300	777	59
Nassau	600	349	58
Missouri	100	57	57
Massachusetts	500	270	54
Pittsburgh	200	116	53
Florida	80	40	50
West Philadelphia	50	25	50
Connecticut	50	24	48
Ohio	100	47	47
Illinois	1200	545	45
New York City	2400	1092	45
Bay Area	750	336	44
New Orleans	30	10	33
Wisconsin	300	100	33
Minnesota	50	15	30
Detroit	400	85	21
New York at large	250	50	20
Northern New Jersey	50	10	20
Washington, D. C.	200	25	12
Boulder	100	5	5
Ann Arbor	50	2	4
Arizona	150	0	0
Central Jersey	50	0	0
Columbus	30	0	0
New Jersey at large	100	0	0
	<u>\$12,000</u>	<u>6,985</u>	<u>58%</u>



Norman Thomas

President Johnson's aspirations for what he calls the Great Society will be hopelessly frustrated by his persistence in the foreign policy which he has inherited and aggravated.

He is spending at least half of each taxpayer's dollar on wars, hot and cold.

He conscripts our sons in increasing number allegedly to fight for other's freedom in a country where they are often greeted by anti-American slogans from those whose "freedom" they are to protect.

He still maintains the most elaborate system of military bases in the territory of other nations known to history.

He keeps in the air American bombers carrying nuclear weapons each many times over the power of that which destroyed Hiroshima. One of those bombs dropped by aerial accident was only recovered off the coast of Spain after 52-days work. A companion bomb, dropped on land in that accident, cracked and polluted crops and soil over an area of 20 acres. So long as our present policy continues, there will be a certain chance of accident with a high probability of far more terrible consequences.

He has announced plans unilaterally to launch a mobile laboratory in space under control of our Air Force, thus violating the UN agreement to keep space free from military facilities.

He has continued the dangerous and stupid policy of actively working to keep the effective government of China out of the UN while insisting that that great nation is represented by Chiang Kai Shek who was ingloriously expelled from it 17 years ago.

He, in his role of self-appointed anti-communist policeman, interfered to prevent a constitutionalist victory in the Dominican Republic, alleging, contrary to fact, that it was to be taken over by communists. The action contravened the UN charter just as did the Russian intervention in Hungary, allegedly to prevent Hungarian revolt from being taken over by fascists. American action increased the number and influence of communists not only in the Dominican Republic but in other Latin American lands.

Worst of all, he wages a cruel, undeclared but escalating war in Vietnam.

A society which permits all this obviously lacks the psychological, moral and economic basis for peace.

Major responsibility for this picture of militarism and neo-imperialism lies in the widespread opinion of government and all-too-many of the American people that our chief duty in the anarchy of nations, which make up our turbulent world is the negative containment of communism. We compound this error by believing we can achieve our ends by military force or threat of force.



It should have been - it now should be - our task to find an alternative to war which our revolutionary, thermonuclear weapons make potentially the catastrophic obliteration of our civilization if not our human race. This process requires universal disarmament under an improved and strengthened UN capable of administering disarmament agreements and playing a constructive role in an essential, world-wide war against poverty.

#### Suggested Revision for Socialist Party Platform: The Near East

In the Near and Middle East peace is menaced by the continuing threats of Arab nations to destroy Israel, and by the constant plotting by Arab leaders against each other despite their genuine desire for Arab unity. The Socialist Party believes that the U.S. and U.N. should use all possible influence to bring about not merely an end of threats but a positive peace on the following principles: (1) The goal of Arab unity or federation is in itself admirable but cannot be desirably achieved on the basis of hate for an Israel that is here to stay. (2) On the contrary, the best interests of the Near East will be served by regional disarmament and economic cooperation of Arab states with Israel, especially in allotment of water under a comprehensive plan such as the Eric Johnson proposal. (3) Israel should do all in its power to maintain full equality of citizenship for Jews and Arabs in Israel and should make every effort consonant with its national security to readmit Arab refugees ready to accept the Israeli government, or otherwise should fully compensate refugees whose property was confiscated, aided in this financial obligation by the United Nations, whose primary responsibility it is, and by all countries interested in world peace.

We urge the United Nations to demand that peace talks be instituted between Israel and the Arab states involved in order to change the armistice agreements into up-dated treaties of peace and to do away with the state of belligerence which some Arab nations maintain still legally exists in the Middle East.

We urge also that the United Nations call together representatives of the United Arab Republic, the Yemen, Saudi Arabia and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in order to achieve a cessation of military conflict in Yemen, the withdrawal of non-Yemenite troops and the achievement of a viable peace there.

Submitted by Samuel H. Friendman



By David McReynolds

I have been increasingly unhappy with the Socialist Party, and in a sense disillusioned. There was the betrayal (no other word is really accurate) of the convention position on Vietnam. We are no longer clearly for the withdrawal of American troops - we are now more or less in the position of demanding that at any given moment there be no more troops sent in. We are against escalation but we are not for withdrawal. If on one day there are fifty thousand troops we demand that not a single new soldier be sent in. But if, a week later, there are a hundred thousand, we do not even demand that the added fifty thousand be withdrawn - we simply repeat our demand that no new troops be sent in. Today there are a quarter of a million troops in and around South Vietnam but still we are being "responsible" and simply urging no further escalation.

One would like, really, to ask a certain wing of the Party, beginning with Max Shachtman and going straight through to Ernst Papanek if there is any point at which they will totally break with the U.S. government on this issue. When, for example, will Paul Feldman lead New America into battle against the government, and abandon the line of critical support?

It is important, however, to face one's disappointment honestly. The convention decision was initially betrayed, in a moral sense, by the failure of the National Committee to reaffirm that decision once it had come under fire by Irwin Suall and the Party's right wing. But let us recognize that the Party as a whole, in a referendum, reversed the convention decision. The problem is not merely with a handful of comrades who - for whatever reason - are unwilling to break with the U.S. foreign policy in any decisive way. The problem is with a majority of the membership.

As one of those who was instrumental in organizing the Party's "left caucus" back in 1954, and helping wage the four year battle that culminated in the admission of the I.S.L. members into the Party in 1958 I confess to a sense of bitterness touched with humor at the thought that Max Shachtman, once the ultra-Left purist and still the literary executor of the writings of Leon Trotsky, should now serve as the intellectual rallying point for the most extreme elements in the Party's right wing. But life has many surprises, not all of them pleasant, and we must learn to accept what comes.

One can also be bitter at the fragmentation of the Party's Left wing, as it occurred within YPSL, destroying our youth movement at the very time a mass student radical movement was emerging. The fault for our present "time of troubles" is by no means entirely on the shoulders of the conservatives within the Party. All have sinned and come short of the glory of Marx.

The Party itself, by standing firmly in the middle of the road, has not really drawn in masses of new members. It has not even drawn in significant clumps of new members. We had hopes, once, when we more or less dissolved the Left Wing grouping, that the S.P. could be a kind of force of moral radicalism in this nation, speaking out with compassion even if it might lack dogmatic precision. We had hopes of seeing a "multiple tendency" Party created. Instead the Left has formed New Politics and independent socialist clubs and has effectively resigned from Party activity. The Right controls New America, which is their only really effective link with the SP, and has otherwise gone off to staff groups like the League for Industrial Democracy, the Workers Defense League, etc. In short many of our best elements, both on the Left and Right, have been driven out of activity or have chosen to remove themselves from activity within the Party itself in order to function more effectively elsewhere.

I cannot altogether blame them, for my own time is now spent entirely with the War Resisters League and, until the Party can find the voice to denounce the war in Vietnam with precision and vigor, I would just as soon keep my membership in the Socialist Party a kind of secret from the general public. I would not want people to think I had become conservative in my old age.



On the eve of a convention to which I doubt I shall be a delegate I would address primarily those of my friends in the Party who consider themselves a part of the "Left". I would say that we have failed to build a mass Party or even a small striking force. Let us, since we cannot have numbers, strive for clarity. Let us attempt once again to assert control over the Party, and to turn it into a "left" socialist movement - even if that should mean the resignation of our friends who would be embarrassed by a Party that gives voice to a radical position.

We need a caucus. We need a caucus of Left Wingers within the Party. And to build that kind of caucus is a tricky thing, because the Left wing often tends to be sectarian, dogmatic, and inflexible in its approach to a radical position. We need to move carefully, to define and to develop a responsible "Left opposition". For all intents and purposes this convention is over before it begins. It will be held in New York, for one thing - which gives the Right Wing an immediate advantage - and it will be held under conditions where the Left will arrive without a program and without any real mandate from the members.

Our task is one that will take at least two years to perform. More likely it will take four years. It is not a matter of winning votes at a convention. The conservatives are always brighter than we are, and in a spirit of comradeship and unity it is traditional to let the Left Wing win the political fights at the convention so long as the Right Wing can keep the Party machinery. I would submit that, in the future, we let the Right Wing win the convention votes and that we concentrate on the machinery.

Betty Elkin was an excellent national secretary. I am sorry she has resigned. Do we have anyone willing to replace her? That is a far more urgent question than whether we win or lose a referendum vote. Paul Feldman is putting out an excellent paper - but it is a paper which A.D.A. ought to be publishing. (Actually the A.D.A. publication is a tiny bit more radical than New America). But while we all like to read New America, and are all glad that liberalism has a political voice, I think some of us would also like to see a socialist newspaper. Can we find an editor to replace Feldman with? Is it possible to move the national office out of New York? Possibly to Chicago?

We can criticize the Party centrists, but they have taken responsibility. Can we do so? Can we organize an informal Left grouping that will keep in touch, that will engage in the struggle for delegates to the 1968 convention and to the 1970 convention, and will continually develop its own spokesmen and leaders who can move in to replace those we don't agree with politically - as in the case of Paul Feldman? We aren't happy with the kind of job some of our delegates to the International have done at past conferences. Can we raise the money to send a Left spokesman, and fight to have him designated Chairman of our delegation and spokesman, therefore, for the Party?

These are the hard questions and I do not know the answers. I do know that if there is hope it is not on the East Coast but in the Mid-West and on the West Coast. I do not expect to be a delegate to the convention but I do expect to be present. Nothing would be more pleasing than to join in a plot to give the Socialist Party a socialist "voice" - which means a maverick, radical, moral, anti-war, dissenting voice. A humane voice. I am weary, really terribly weary, of the overly "political" approach of some comrades which made it possible for groups like S.D.S. to become the spokesman for youth today, rather than our own YPSL.

I resigned from the National Committee in protest against the failure of that Committee to act decisively on the Vietnam War. But at least a portion of the time I devoted to the NAC and NC meetings I would be willing to devote to taking part in an organized caucus. I do not have the time to organize such a caucus but I would be eager to take part in it. I think others who have dropped out of national



activity might also want to take part in such a caucus. The coming convention is important, but more important than any decisions it will take on the floor itself may be those decisions quietly taken by some of us who, aware now of how far the Party has drifted, and eager to restore vitality to it, meet and decide to present out viewpoint in an organized way in the months to come.

I am not hopeful. Time may well have passed us by - and I do not mean those of us on the Left, but the Party itself. I will, of course, maintain my membership - I am a socialist, a democratic socialist, and there is no other organization I can join just now. We can all recount our mistakes and our failures. I have made more than my share of them. Part of the process of life is to endure a seemingly endless series of defeats. But perhaps we ought, like good warriors, to do battle once again.

On resolutions, there are two I would urge be presented to the floor of the convention. Brief resolutions. Clearly stated. With the mandate that they be published in full in New America. These resolutions will not turn a moderate, centrist, mild social-democratic group into a democratic socialist Party, but we would be remiss in our duty if they were not presented for a vote.

The precise wording can be greatly changed - this is done in haste - but I propose the following for consideration:

1. The Socialist Party is aware of the agony the people of Vietnam, both North and South, have endured as a result of more than two decades of endless war. War with the Japanese, with the French, with the Americans, and a civil war which has divided the people of Vietnam among themselves.

We are aware of the complexity of the present situation, in which terrorism is exercised by both sides in the conflict. And we know that a victory for the National Liberation Front would mean a victory for Vietnamese Communism - a victory that would not mean democracy even though it would bring an end to the war and would probably result in significant material achievements. As democratic socialists we are appalled when material gains are won at the cost of human freedom, but when the conquest of poverty and disease and hunger is linked to totalitarian forms of social organization, we believe that socialism must mean the full liberation of man, from both material and from political repression.

It is not, therefore, easy to urge the withdrawal of American forces when we believe this would mean the victory of anti-democratic elements. Our position on Vietnam has not been reached easily nor is it set forth lightly.

But, in the view of the Socialist Party, it is clear that the American intervention in Vietnam was - at best - a tragically ill-advised action back in 1954 and it has increasingly become a criminal action. The Communists would probably prevent free elections if they took power. But we prevented free elections in 1956 and have never permitted them since that time. The Communists might engage in political terrorism if they took over. But we have already engaged in such terrorism since our arrival in Vietnam.

The brutality of American actions is now so massive that there is virtually nothing the National Liberation Front could do, if victorious, that would be half as evil as what our own nation has already done.

The actions of the American government in massive bombing of civilian areas in the South of Vietnam, in heavy bombing of North Vietnam, and in military attacks on the territory of Cambodia and Laos, have shocked the peoples of the world. Peace will be hard to achieve in Vietnam, but peace must be made by the peoples of Vietnam. The United States has no right to be in Vietnam. It has taken no genuine steps toward peace in that bloodied land. Instead, it has resorted to escalation and "military terror" in a vain effort to force the opposition into surrender.

We therefore urge that the U.S. government take the following immediate steps.



1. That we immediately cease all bombing operations anywhere in North or South Vietnam, in Cambodia, or in Laos.
2. That we immediately cease the introduction of all new military equipment into South Vietnam.
3. That we immediately begin the withdrawal of U.S. military forces in South Vietnam and that this withdrawal continue as swiftly as possible until all U.S. military forces have been completely and entirely withdrawn from South Vietnam.
4. That we immediately declare our willingness to recognize the right of the Vietnamese people to choose a government of their choice and our willingness, in cooperation with other nations, to make available medical aid, food, and industrial credits to aid in the reconstruction of both South and North Vietnam.

#### Second Resolution:

President Lyndon Baines Johnson is a figure of tragedy for all Americans and for himself. Elected on a platform of peace and massive domestic social change, he almost immediately repudiated his election promises by escalating the war in Vietnam. He smashed the democratic revolution in the Dominican Republic. He has sought to cut back on needed domestic programs to finance a foreign policy based on naked military power.

In the course of his term of office he has violated the treaties of the OAS, the charter of the U.N., the constitutional provisions regarding a declaration of war, and the various International Regulations regarding inhumane methods of waging war and treating prisoners.

He has spoken constantly of peace and yet has constantly escalated the war. Thousands of Americans and tens upon tens of thousands of Vietnamese are dead or horribly wounded because of the foreign policies of the President and his advisors.

The citizens of this nation have petitioned and picketed, they have reasoned and written, in trying to persuade the President to have the simple courage to admit we were wrong in ever intervening in Vietnam, and to take steps to withdraw from Vietnam. But the government has chosen to ignore these protests, and to speak of a non-existent consensus. It has chosen to continue to act in violation of international treaties and international law. It has ordered U.S. troops - our fellow citizens - to commit war crimes, through the use of gas and napalm and the shelling of civilian areas, and the execution of prisoners.

The Socialist Party states that it is absolutely opposed to this war. We fully support all those young men of draft age who, whether or not they are pacifists in a traditional sense, refuse to serve in a war which is clearly criminal.

We greatly fear that Johnson and his advisors in the Pentagon and the State Dept. may be leading us toward war with China. We know where they have already led us - into a brutal and inhuman conflict imposed on a tiny nation on the Asian mainland. It is not enough for us to protest against this war, or to declare our support for those who will not fight in it. We go further: We call upon the Congress of the U.S. to impeach the President and remove him from office.

Third Resolution: The SP directs the editor of New America to include the two above resolutions in the first issue of New America appearing after the convention, and to give special prominence to the resolution on the impeachment of Johnson.

A final note: It doesn't matter how the third resolution is worded, as it is not for publication. But it is important that the first two resolutions be reworded and given better form. They have been written in haste and are only a first draft. The key point however is that the term "immediate withdrawal" of troops and "impeachment of Johnson" both get in, without being watered down. Both of these resolutions-particularly the one on Johnson's impeachment-will probably be defeated and certainly provide the basis for a lively and educational floor fight. Even if passed, however, resolutions do not meet the needs I dealt with earlier in this memo-the needs we have for an organized and responsible expression of a "left" position within the Party.



# Democratic Reform and Resistance to Totalitarianism in South Vietnam

By Ephraim Friend

The following was presented at a pre-convention discussion meeting arranged by Local New York on April 7, 1966. The paragraphs on the current Saigon crises are brief extensions of comments made during the ensuing discussion.

All participants in this discussion have a basic assumption in common: We are all agreed that political problems should be considered "in terms of ethical and human values as well as in terms of economics and political power."

We do not accept Professor Hans Morgenthau's position that in matters of foreign policy questions of morality and democratic principles are inapplicable and misleading.

Our concern is not limited to the protection of national interests, conceived of in the narrow terms of power politics.

We are not neutral, nor can we afford to be passive, in the struggle for democracy, equality, and social justice and freedom no matter where it takes place, in the United States or far away Asia or Africa. As internationalists we must not succumb to neo-isolationist moods.

As with all principles, problems and differences emerge with their specific application. Vietnam is no exception.

The destruction and suffering in Vietnam tears at one's guts. One's natural and direct, anguished impulse is to end the fighting immediately and unconditionally.

Daily newspaper accounts make us acutely aware that the price of continuing the struggle is measured in human terms.

Here I come to the heart of my position.

The victory of totalitarianism in Vietnam will increase mass killing, and not end it.

Most people are aware of the brutalities of the Diem government and the authoritarian, unrepresentative character of the Ky regime. Few, however, have paid sufficient attention to or know the nature of the Ho Chi Minh regime.

The Vietcong is not a progressive movement, possessing unfortunate tendencies to violence or dictatorial procedures. It is not an "essentially nationalist dissident movement," nor "a federation of Maquis."

The Vietcong is a reactionary movement, that exploits the real and legitimate discontents and national aspirations of the people, to erect a totalitarian collectivist state, in which new classes of exploiters tyrannize over the people. Mass purges and concentration camps are part of its usual practice.

Let me illustrate this by quoting from Hoang Van Chi, a Vietnamese socialist who fought with the Vietminh in the war against the French and who lived through the events he describes.

Parenthetically, Hoang reminds us that -

"the Allies supported the Vietminh during the Second World War and provided the Communists with their opportunity to emerge as a government. The same powers are still, at present, supporting a highly reactionary government in the South, thus making a propaganda gift to Communist subversion."

In his book "From Colonialism to Communism: A Case History of North Vietnam" (Praeger 1964), which as Paul Feldman says, should be required reading for anyone interested in the Vietnamese problem, Hoang describes the methods used by the Ho Chi Minh bureaucratic elite to solidify its rule.

In the so-called agrarian reform, carried out in the early period of the Geneva Truce, i.e., 1954-1955 - 1956, the Lao Dang party was guided by the principle enunciated by the North Vietnamese Communist leader Nguyen Manh Tuang, "It is better to kill ten innocent people than to let one enemy escape." (P. 213)



A minimum quota of death sentences was fixed for every village, even in those villages in which all the land was communal and where no landowners of any kind, small or large, existed. (P. 212)

Four or five percent of the total population was massacred in this campaign - about five hundred thousand, for the most part patently innocent people. (This is two to three times the number killed in the fighting in South Vietnam since 1954).

People were starved to death, tortured, jailed or sent for correctional training (read brainwashing).

The Lao Dang leadership sought "to purge all nationalist elements and any party members in whom there was the least suspicion of unorthodoxy."

Keep in mind that this terror was directed against people who had not fought the Communists. Some had been their ardent followers. Imagine what will happen in South Vietnam to the approximately two million people who actively opposed the Vietcong.

How do the advocates of immediate, unilateral withdrawal square this with their consciences? These potential victims of cruel reprisal can't wait until a Titoist transformation takes place. They will be dead long before it occurs, if ever.

There is no getting around it. Immediate withdrawal means handing over every liberal, every Socialist, every Trotskyist, let alone ordinary nationalists, to the executioner, jailer and torturer.

Is this humanitarian?

Why do the frameups and literal lynchings, organized by the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong, loom less large in the concern of the advocates of withdrawal than the vastly smaller number of murdered and tortured under Diem, and particularly under Khanh and Ky. The Diems and Kys should be overthrown and punished for their violation of human rights but even more so should the Vietcong and the Ho Chi Minh government forces.

Robert Scigliano writing in 1963 just before the overthrow of Diem reports the following:

"the government has thus far confined its use of military justice to clear cut cases of terrorism whereby it could dramatize its struggle against the enemy and most such cases have involved the death penalty. For the great majority of political prisoners, the penalty has been incarceration without trial and re-education centers." (South Vietnam: Nation Under Stress - P. 171).

People who consider the victory of the Vietcong a lesser evil forget that the Diem "government treatment of pro-Communists, though at times brutal enough, is less ruthless than the practices used by the Communists against pro-nationalists." (P.161)

The totalitarian character of the Vietcong determines a fundamental aspect of the war in Vietnam.

The war in Vietnam has a basic anti-totalitarian significance. It is crucial for freedom and democracy in Asia that totalitarianism be prevented from winning another victory. Whether this totalitarianism is foreign controlled or indigenous is hardly not a decisive consideration.

In this kind of war it is disastrous to rely on military force alone. To wage it effectively the war has to be politicalized.

Experience has shown how self-defeating was the policy of reluctant United States support to the authoritarian and military regimes in South Vietnam and the failure to press determinedly and persistently for free democratic institutions and reforms. Instead officials just pleaded with and coaxed Diem and his successors.

The democratic left, in my opinion made a fundamental error. Instead of realizing the nature of the war and directing its main thrust toward democratization and social reform, it, by and large, opposed the war. It thus abandoned a position of potential power to effect the Vietnam situation. This I consider to be one of the tragedies of the war.

What do we do now?

Should we simply conclude that the situation is so messed up by past crimes and mistakes, that it is no longer possible to repair the situation.



Should we conclude that because the majority of South Vietnamese, which is opposed to the Vietcong, is fragmented, unorganized and at loggerheads within itself, that there is no hope to create a free and democratic South Vietnam. Many honorable men have reluctantly come to this sad conclusion and have proposed various ways of disengagement.

These have included proposals of unilateral cease fire, United States withdrawal to enclaves, to conduct a defensive, delaying action, which make the ultimate withdrawal less precipitous and provide some bargaining leverage for the United States at the negotiating table. This bargaining leverage could be used to save some anti-Vietcong nationalists from murderous reprisals. The peasants and ordinary city dweller would still remain to become victims.

Others have advocated the setting up of a coalition government with the National Liberation Front prior to determination by free elections. This proposal for a deal at the top, rather than for self-determination, is a reactionary elitist arrangement, that will help the Vietcong gain decisive governmental powers, which it probably could not gain in a really free election.

It is not accidental that the National Liberation Front and Ho Chi Minh are not calling for immediate free elections, but rather demand the acceptance of the National Liberation Front as the sole representative of the South Vietnamese nation. They are afraid to risk an election at this point. In 1956, when they were justifiably more confident, they insisted on elections, despite Diem's tight rule.

All discontented political elements should, in my opinion, have a real role at the negotiating table, setting the terms for and in making sure that free elections are really free, and not mere Napoleonic plebiscites. This, is, however, not the same thing as giving the Vietcong access to the levers of governmental power in advance.

As Socialists we should never forget that to have meaningful free elections, political parties must be allowed to exist and function in both Saigon and Vietcong controlled territories. Freedom of assembly, press and speech must become realities before elections can be called free. Secret ballot boxes do not, in themselves, guarantee free elections. Free elections presuppose a real opportunity of choice.

Everyone is for negotiations. Even those who favor immediate withdrawal are willing to negotiate the details of the withdrawal. Those who want to use nuclear weapons also favor negotiations. They would like to negotiate unconditional surrender of the enemy.

The differences, in the Vietnam Debate, concern what should be compromised and given up, either in advance, or at the negotiating conference.

It is my conviction that the National Liberation Front and Hanoi are resisting negotiations, not because they are suspicious of President Johnson, but because they hope to get, through a diplomatic settlement, what they can't get through free elections or military victory. They see the United States as another France whose people will tire of sacrifices and setbacks. They also count on the frailty of the Saigon government. Short of turning over key governmental power to the National Liberation Front there are no ways of bringing immediate peace to Vietnam.

All the proposals of the opponents of the Vietnam war amount to an acceptance of this option. I see no evidence that they really expect to create viable opportunities for the non-communist democrats to come to governmental power.

The way to bring peace to Vietnam, and not just the peace of the Vietcong concentration camp or cemetery requires:



1. democratization of South Vietnam
2. firm resistance, both political and military, to any assumption of power by the Vietcong, not emerging from really free elections
3. a crash program for social and agrarian reform. As a starter all land must be declared to be the property of the peasants who work it.
4. financial and political assistance to the trade unions, embryonic, democratic and socialist parties of South Vietnam, by the United States trade union and liberal movement.
5. a readiness to give the Communists, as a political party, full access to political life of the country, but not as a military, semi-governmental force. No democracy can be built on the latter basis.

Can this be done?

Direct American intervention has bought the opportunity and the time. The difference between government by Ky's and the Vietcong is that the latter's victory is foreclosing and final. The Kys are much weaker and lack totalitarian power to maintain their rule. This gives the democratic forces a chance to intervene and create new conditions and new life for South Vietnam.

The demonstrations now taking place in South Vietnam point up this difference. Who has ever heard of oppositional demonstrations in Vietcong, or North Vietnamese, territory?

As Penn Kemble has wisely pointed out in New America, the demonstrations reflect a growing confidence, on the part of the urban population of Vietnam, that the likelihood of a Vietcong victory has markedly diminished. The state of South Vietnam has a future and there is something worth fighting about.

The turmoil in the cities of South Vietnam are manifestations of "a fundamental shift in the locus of urban political power", from the older mandrinal classes, ex-aristocrats, wealthy landowners and French educated intelligentsia, to newer social groupings expressing an ardent and passionate Vietnamese nationalism. The latter include militant, younger Buddhist bonzes (monks), young Turks in the Army, volatile student groups, former civilian political opponents of the Diem regime and the trade union movement (C.T.V.). Only the Buddhists, the younger, non-French trained army officers and the trade union movement have effective mass organizations.

This social and nationalistic revolution was, brought to Western attention by George Carver, Jr. in Foreign Affairs, April 1965. In terms of his analysis Carver envisions this process of "urban regeneration" as holding hope for more genuine stability and strength than any South Vietnamese government has ever known. The current crisis in South Vietnam involves a "testing of strengths and tentative trials of new balance."

#### TO CONCLUDE:

The main thrust of the democratic left in the United States should be towards democratic reform in South Vietnam rather than towards abandonment of resistance to Vietcong totalitarianism.

A stable peace, that can bring self-rule and genuine independence to the South Vietnamese, is attainable only with the ending of the military, insurrectionary threat from the Vietcong.

In urging negotiations and concessions on both sides, Senator Robert Kennedy pointed out "both sides must come to any discussion with at least one basic condition, one irreducible demand, one point they will not yield. For the U.S. it must be that we will not turn South Vietnam over to the North."

For the democratic left, the irreducible demand must read "we will not turn South Vietnam over to the Vietcong."



# Where Is The Socialist Party?

Gordon Burnside  
Local Columbia, Mo.

The final tally on the Vietnam referendum would ordinarily have come (at least to me) as a surprise. Instead, since we were unable to scare up enough votes to call the referendum in the first place, the result was anti-climatic; apparently several hundred party members--a big bite--did not even send in ballots. It's obvious now that most comrades were satisfied with the Thomas resolution. Others preferred to hold off a few months until the June convention. Still, the lack of enthusiasm is puzzling. Surely almost all Socialists are caught up in one way or another with the opposition to the war. (Despite my experience in the old, suspended YPSL I am tempted to say that we are presently suffering from a lack of factionalism!) I suspect that if the response to the referendum was weak that was because so many of us had already voted in other precincts: SANE, SDS, NCC, etc. Maybe the position of the Socialist Party just didn't seem to matter very much.

People have been writing obituaries for the SP for a good many years now, fortunately all premature heretofore. But its possible that the next one, or the one after that, may be the real thing. There is no need here to go into the reasons for the Party's decline since 1912. But God knows we should be asking ourselves why now--at a time when the American Left is experiencing a relative revitalization--we can must comparatively few members, and why we find it so hard to muster what little we do. The notes that follows are almost criminal in their brevity, but I think that these things should at least be said before the convention. Maybe other comrades will help pad them out.

It's bad enough that the SP is so small. To a large extent the party functions as a way-station; people join and then later split, some going Left, others Right. Still others fall from political activity into good intentions. But it is those of us, those who remain Socialists, who are making the Party invisible. We function as members of various committees, unions, study groups, projects and movements. But we do very little within the context of the SP itself. In the latest LID bulletin Irving Howe admits that the nature of that organization prevents many members from fully identifying with it. But many Socialists have less trouble identifying with the LID, our more vital brother--or, in my case, SDS, the prodigal nephew--than with their own party. Not just politics but functions become so blurred that one has visions of the SP disappearing into the mouth of the LID which, in turn, is being swallowed by the "democratic Left".

In one sense this is a hopeful turn for Socialists: perhaps we are at last on the edge of Coalition or coalitions. On the other hand does the Socialist Party have a value independent of coalition-building, and can we--both as Socialists and radical Americans--afford to see that value neglected? Since we do take the trouble to carry red cards I assume that our answers are yes and no respectively. But our commitment is increasingly off-handed, one of nostalgia rather than political content. So our Party grows even more ephemeral.



Granted that this is at least unfortunate, and possibly tragic, should we not be thinking of ways to give back to the Party the body which, to use a popular phrase, has been steadily co-opted by the "new" and "democratic" Lefts. Let me lead off with some proposals, some I think rather mild, others sweeping. Two are largely organizational in nature, two others deal with functions; political implications are rampant though, I hope, still more or less submerged and problematic. I invite rebuttals, friendly suggestions, unfriendly charges of factional heresy. At this point a little anger among Socialists--anything among Socialists as Socialists--would be cheering.

1) We permit ourselves the luxury of describing our little band as a party. But it isn't really. What we have is a loose committee of several thousands with the swinging end at 1182 Broadway. Party locals and branches, such as the one in Los Angeles, are doing some good things, but most function at best as recruiting and rallying points for city/area popular fronts, and are thus easily superseded. I suggest, first of all, a little modesty: to work seriously at building the "democratic left" is to constrict the scope of the SP. That's what we're doing anyway, but it would help to admit it. And a little audacity: some of our resources, and the insights and values behind them, are rather unique on the Left; let's claim that we do have a right to an independent life and invite others to take part in Socialist projects, instead of the other way around. But this presupposes projects on a national or international level, delineated from others on the Left, and coordinated by a national committee.

2) The YPSL is growing again; it looks good. But the idea of a youth group for a party of our size strikes me as silly. I suggest that we do away with either the Party or the youth group. I know it would place new burdens of tolerance on all of us, but we can see now that we are going to have that burden anyway, outside the Party. Besides, in the age of SNCC, SDS, SSOC, etc. the youth group idea--we decided two years ago that YPSL could not be autonomous--is essentially undemocratic.

3. Mike Harrington's best criticism of the kids is that they are not internationalist enough. In fact, a rather isolationist point of view, for one reason or another, is widespread on the Left. Here is where the SP should come in. One of the very best things SDS has done was its Chase Manhattan demonstration. But why didn't we Socialists do it first? Beyond this there is the large question of the Socialist International. Some months ago I suggested to Paul Salstrom of CNVA that he approach the IUSY or IUSY people with his Peace and Freedom Corps idea. Small as we are I think we should be raising all kinds of hell in the SI to get them to doing several things: organizing an international socialist youth corps to work in Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and especially in Latin America, which should be a top priority. Our party should at least be embarrassing our Labor and Social Democratic brethren over the issues of Vietnam and imperialism in general. The best objection to this kind of work is that it won't work: why should the SI parties pay attention to little old us? But since it is our country that most endangers peace and reform I think we have the right and the expectation to be heard. There is surely something we can do to make the International internationalist. And if not, we should be helping to build another international.



4) This will be a year of peace candidates; hopefully some Socialists will be running, as Socialists, for public office. But for some years now we have seen that, as a general rule, electoral activity produces small results for us. The same might be said for Socialist education as a whole. Perhaps that is because we have little to say that could not be said equally well said--and to a larger audience--by a non-Socialist (e.g., LID, Fund for the Republic). But what we might do is look back into the controversies of the old colonialist Social Democracy of America of the late 1890's and talk again of creating socialist alternatives within present society. Specifically, why shouldn't the SP go into the full-time business of encouraging co-operatives in the South and in Northern cities? Why couldn't an internationalist SI send us young Danes and Israelis for technical aid? Why shouldn't a Swedish or English co-operative "adopt" a struggling young Mississippi or Chicago one: donate some token capital, provide a small market exchange? Why not have the SP and the SI jointly send Socialist, SNCC and SDS kids to school in European co-ops?

Internationalism and pre-utopia socialism are the generally neglected aspects of the American Left we hope to eventually see. It happens, I think, that the Socialist Party is by tradition and insight uniquely qualified to work toward the creation of both. The primary objection to this sort of work is that we lack the necessary resources. But we know that its increasingly difficult to finance even minor things, a pamphlet now and then, correspondence, the printing of our platform. (It is enough that Norman Thomas should personify Socialism; he shouldn't have to pay for it too.) Economics should tell us that we're going to have to spend before we can solicit; branch work should tell us that we must set a project--a Socialist project--in motion before we can expect to recruit Socialists.

Finally, I don't think independent Socialist work is superfluous. I think that not only the possibility but the need to separate Socialist work and ideas from "liberal" or even "radical" ones exists. There are things to be done that we can do best. We are superfluous only if we don't do them.



## Dues Strike ... A Last Resort

Joe Stetson

For a long time, most comrades have known that New America is not representative of the Party as a whole, but the house organ of the New York-based clique which has taken over de facto control of the SP as well. The last Party convention confirmed this fact both by the ferocity of the floor fight over the committee report on New America, and by the intransigence of its editor in the face of the obvious desire of the Party rank and file to affect some changes in the editorial policy and general format of the paper.

Subsequent events, the increasingly rigid control of New America by the realignment clique, and the gradual disaffection among locals and comrades in widely scattered areas--Columbia, Mo., Wisconsin (cancellation of subs and motion of censure by State SP committee), Indiana (substitution of locally written materials), have reenforced the trend.

The intolerable nature of this situation for left-wing social democrats, revolutionary democratic socialists and others in the SP left has long been recognized. While the decision of the Berkeley Independent Socialist Club not to make an organized effort to rectify this situation reflected a great deal of political maturity and admirable restraint, such a decision still leaves the left-wing socialist subject to the twin afflictions of misrepresentation of his views by the party press, and the misuse of his dues money for a purpose he neither approves of, nor in which he has any voice.

Given this situation, I find I have no alternative but to take steps to withhold my support from the party newspaper, New America. Until the above conditions are remedied, I shall refuse to pay that portion of my Socialist Party dues, approximately \$4.00 per year, which go in any way, either by direct subsidy, or indirect aid (free office space), to support New America.

If other comrades wish to follow suit, I welcome their support. The fact that my views will be taken seriously by few, if any, (If I am to judge by past experience), will not deter me. I believe my dues strike is in the best tradition of radical, non-violent protest.

Excerpt From Letter from the Norman Thomas Chapter, YPSL

We were really amazed by the letter from Joe Stetson in the latest issue of Young Socialist Review, urging a dues strike against the Socialist Party to force changes in NEW AMERICA editorial policy, or to make it impossible for NA to continue publishing. Stetson announced he has already commenced the dues strike and urges others to join him.

Not only is this an abomination and disregard for every principle of organizational responsibility and democracy, it is an announcement that Stetson is disavowing the pledge he made upon joining the SP to abide by the responsibilities of SP membership (which includes paying dues).

We know that the SP has been lenient in dues collection in the past - a fact which has benefited all political tendencies. But such lenience is far different from tolerance for a deliberate and organized effort to engage in financial blackmail of the Party.

Note from National Administrative Secretary: The policy of the SP has always been to recognize those who pay dues, even if somewhat late. There is no constitutional provision for a "dues strike".



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